

Message Text

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FOR CARTER FROM PA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (VANCE)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT STEPHEN S. ROSENFELD ARTICLE
OP-ED PAGE WASHINGTON POST FRIDAY JANUARY 20 HEADED
"A FOREIGN POLICY STILL UNDEFINED."

2. A YEAR AGO I WAS READY FOR JIMMY CARTER TO TAKE ON
THE WORLD, BUT NOW I'M NOT SO SURE. HIS PRODIGIOUS
CONCENTRATION ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, FAR FROM FILLING IN
THE GAPS OF HIS INEXPERIENCE, HAS RAISED QUESTIONS
ABOUT HIS JUDGMENT. HE DOES NOT SEEM TO HAVE CON-
VINCED AMERICANS, ALLIES OR ADVERSARIES THAT HE HAS ANY
CLEAR NOTION OF HOW THE UNITED STATES' STILL-GREAT
POWER SHOULD BE EMPLOYED. FEW MAY BE READY TO WRITE
HIM OFF, BUT MANY WONDER NERVOUSLY WHETHER HE CAN
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STEER THE COUNTRY WELL THROUGH THE INTERNATIONAL RAPIDS.

3. THESE ARE TRICKY TIMES. THERE IS NO CONSPICUOUS
OR IMMINENT FOREIGN "THREAT." ONLY THE MORE NERVOUS
AND IDEOLOGICAL AMONG US WOULD HEIGHTEN PREPARATIONS
FOR A COUNTDOWN WITH THE COMMUNISTS. BUT THERE IS AN
UNDERLYING SENSE THAT THE RUSSIANS ARE UP TO SOMETHING.

WITH EUROCOMMUNISTS ACTIVE IN EUROPE, AND CUBANS ON THE

MOVE IN AFRICA, AND MOSCOW CONTINUING TO BUILD CONVENTIONAL AND STRATEGIC POWER, IT SEEMS OFF THE MARK TO DO RHETORICAL BATTLE AGAINST AN "INORDINATE" FEAR OF COMMUNISM. CARTER LAYS A STRAW MAN. WHAT SORT OF ANXIETY WOULD BE "ORDINATE"? CARTER DOESN'T SAY.

4. ASIDE FROM TENDING TO PHYSICAL SECURITY, THE PRINCIPAL TASK OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY IS TO MAKE THE ADJUSTMENTS THAT WILL ENSURE OUR ECONOMIC SECURITY OVER THE COMING DECADES. THIS IS ANOTHER WAY OF SAYING THAT THE PRESIDENT, WHO IN OUR SYSTEM IS THE ONLY QUARTER EXPECTED TO ARTICULATE THE (ITALICS) NATIONAL (END ITALICS) INTEREST, SHOULD IN FACT BE ARTICULATING IT AND USING HIS POLITICAL POWERS TO MOVE CONTENDING INTEREST GROUPS TOWARD IT. (ITALICS) THIS (END ITALICS) IS ANOTHER WAY OF SAYING THAT HE MUST WORK WITH CONGRESS. BUT LOOK WHAT HAPPENED TO ENERGY (AND PANAMA) IN 1977. WATCH WHAT MAY HAPPEN TO AID AND SALT (AND PANAMA) IN 1978. SOME WOULD EXCUSE CARTER FROM WAGING THESE BATTLES: IT'S THE "POST-IMPERIAL PRESIDENCY." NOT I. HIS OWN POLITICAL SKILLS, AND HIS STAFF, AREN'T YET SHARP ENOUGH.

5. WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE CARTER? OFTEN CLUTCHING FOR UNCLASSIFIED

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SYMBOLS--ATTRACTIVE AND WORTHWHILE SYMBOLS LIKE HUMAN RIGHTS, REDUCTION OF ARMS SALES, COMBATING NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION--BUT SYMBOLS ALL THE SAME. YOU CAN SAY HE FEELS THEM STRONGLY. YOU CAN SAY HE WAS ELECTED TO DO THESE THINGS. YOU CANNOT SAY THEY ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS IN FOREIGN POLICY. THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS ARE TO TEND TO THE PHYSICAL AND ECONOMIC SECURITY OF OURSELVES AND OUR FRIENDS. ONLY A VERY RICH, GUILT-RIDDEN NATION, WHICH AT THE END OF THE VIETNAM PERIOD WE WERE, WOULD ALLOW A PRESIDENT TO ELEVATE A QUEST FOR PURITY INTO WHAT OFTEN SEEMS HIS FIRST PRIORITY.

6. HIS MORALISM CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE AT CERTAIN TIMES AND PLACES ABROAD. BUT IT ALSO CAN PRODUCE A NATIONALISTIC BACKLASH AGAINST ITS INTENDED BENEFICIARIES, AND IT CAN SOUR THE TASTE OF FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS TO COOPERATE IN OTHER FIELDS OF MUTUAL INTEREST. INDEED, THE CARTER STRESS ON UNIVERSAL VALUES HAS LED TO A GENERAL UNDERAPPRECIATION OF NATIONALISM. AND THE SELECTIVITY ENFORCED BY DIPLOMATIC NECESSITY RISKS ERODING HIS DOMESTIC BASE.

7. CARTER WAS NOT ELECTED TO BE A FOREIGN-AFFAIRS PRESIDENT. HE MAY HAVE WON SOME LIBERAL VOTES WITH HIS PROMISE TO PUT MORALITY BACK INTO POLICY, BUT MORE

IMPORTANT IN HIS VICTORY WAS THE SUBSTANTIAL SUCCESS OF THE NIXON-FORD-KISSINGER BALANCE-OF-POWER POLICY IN MAKING IT APPEAR SAFE TO ELECT AN ESSENTIALLY PROVINCIAL MAN. HE IS STILL LIVING OFF NIXON'S AND KISSINGER'S FOREIGN-POLICY "EARNINGS": OFF THE RELATIVE STABILITY THEY BROUGHT BY ENLISTING CHINA TO OFFSET THE SOVIET UNION AND OFF THE CONCERN FOR THE THIRD WORLD THAT KISSINGER BEGAN PROMOTING IN HIS LAST COUPLE OF YEARS. GRANTED IT'S EARLY, BUT HE HAS YET TO SHAPE A CONTRIBUTION OF HIS OWN.

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8. CARTER NOW SEEMS READY, AS EARLIER HE DID NOT, TO SLOW THE PACE OF AMERICAN DIPLOMACY, IN RESPECT TO SUCH COMPLEX ISSUES AS SALT AND THE MIDDLE EAST. FORTUNATELY, HE HAS NOT LOST HIS TENDENCY TO TRY SEEING PROBLEMS IN THE ROUND. BUT HE HAS THRUST HIMSELF EXCESSIVELY INTO THE DAILY ROUTINE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. HE SEEMS DRIVEN TO SHOW HE CAN MASTER THE TECHNICAL WORK. HIS VERBAL GAFFES ARE NO LONGER FORGIVABLE. THE NOTION THAT ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI CAN, BY HIS INCREASINGLY FREQUENT PUBLIC BRIEFINGS, PROVIDE A MORE SYSTEMATIC AND PRECISE ARTICULATION OF PRESIDENTIAL PURPOSE SEEMS TO ME TO MISS THE POINT.

9. IN CYRUS VANCE AND HAROLD BROWN CARTER HAS TWO MUMBLERS. BUT THEY ARE SAVVY HANDS, AND IF THEY DO NOT SPEAK PERSUASIVELY THEY DO SPEAK PRECISELY, AND, PERHAPS MORE IMPORTANT, WHAT THEY SAY IS WHAT THEY DO WITH THE CHIEF INSTRUMENTS OF EXECUTIVE POWER. THE MAKING OF FOREIGN POLICY TODAY REQUIRES NOT DAILY PRESIDENTIAL CAPTAINCY AS IN A WAR OR CRISIS BUT THE CAREFUL FITTING TOGETHER OF ENDS AND MEANS, AND THIS IS WHAT GOOD CABINET OFFICERS ARE MEANT TO DO. CARTER HIMSELF SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON IMPROVING THE PROCESS BY WHICH HE MUSTERS POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR HIS NATIONAL-SECURITY OBJECTIVES. THAT WILL KEEP HIM PLENTY BUSY. END TEXT. CHRISTOPHER

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